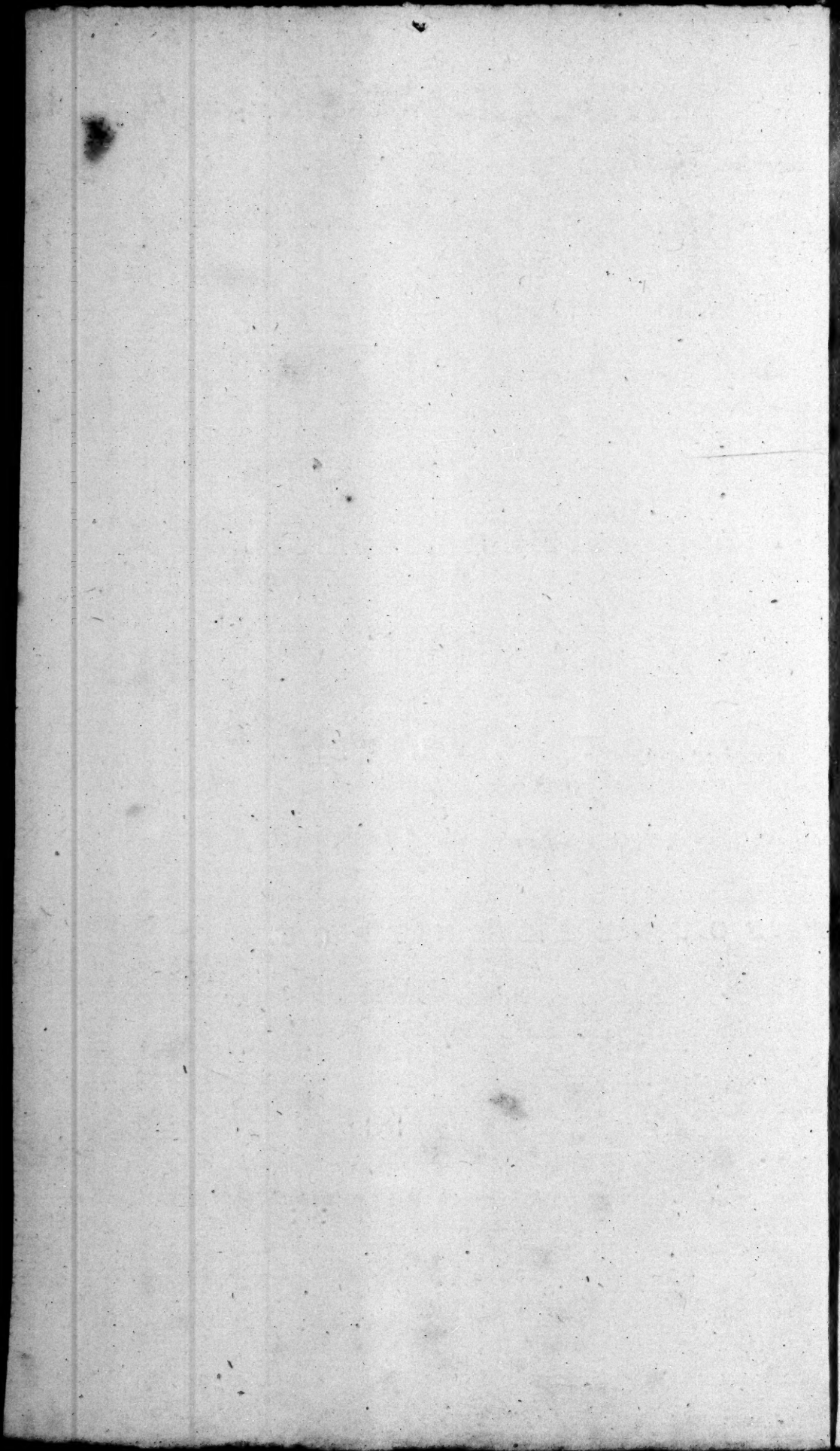


*See MS. on back of Title p. of Archaeolog. Epist. the  
last in this Vol.*

KING STEPHEN'S WATCH.

A T A L E,

FOUNDED ON FACT.



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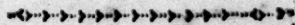
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B Y

THE AUTHOR OF THE HEROIC EPISTLE

TO SIR WILLIAM CHAMBERS, KNT.

*Mason*



L O N D O N :

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M D C C L X X I I .



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May 7. 1954

# KING STEPHEN'S WATCH.

A T A L E,

FOUNDED ON FACT.\*

AVAUNT! ye wife, disloyal throng,  
Who think a monarch may do wrong!  
I'll prove, in every rebel's spite,  
Ev'n all he touches must do right.

\* King Stephen presented a Watch to one of his courtiers, ycleped Sm<sup>e</sup>t, and condescended to regulate it with his own royal hands. Sm<sup>e</sup>t being in a promiscuous company, enquiry was made after the hour of the day. Watches were drawn out, when the differences were marked, and consisted, as usual, in the variation of some minutes, from one to ten or fifteen. The royal watch alone was before the foremost an hour and a half, and was consequently reprobated as heretical. Sm<sup>e</sup>t, however, insisted that his was right, and *must* be right, being regulated by infallible royalty, &c. &c.

King Stephen was a worthy peer,

His breeches cost him half a crown,

In which a watch this King did wear,

All in a fob of fustian brown.

“Heavens!” cries Dean M<sup>i</sup>-ll<sup>e</sup>s in fage amaze,

“A watch, and worn in Stephen’s days!”

This anecdote we do not read,

In *Baker*, *Hollingsbed*, or *Speed*.

Watches, when first invented—seek ’em,

In brother Trusler’s *Vade Mecum*.

—See here—first brought to England—ev’n

So late as fifteen ninety-seven,

—Now Stephen reign’d,”—

I care not when ;

Doctor, you interrupt my pen.



'Tis rude to stop a staunch old tory

Thus at the out-set of his story.

If other folks me tripping catch,

About King Stephen and his watch,

You prudently should wink, I ween ;

You—a grave Churchman, nay a Dean !

With watch in fob, as first I said,

King Stephen strutted o'er the mead,

And met a courtier slim, yet sleek,

With foretop high, and smirking cheek,

Supple his loins, his ham-strings weak ;

Who crouch'd, and stretch'd his beak before,

Like goose approaching a barn-door.

“ Hold up thy head,” King Stephen cried,

“ And walk a while at our left side.

Sir courtier ! of our courtly train,  
 We hold thee, the most gallant swain ;  
 Nor is there any squire we know,  
 Who speaks so smooth, or bows so low ;  
 Whether from nature, or from art,  
 Yet sure we are thou topp'st thy part.  
 Here, take this watch, we've set it so,  
 To tell thee when to come and go,  
 To fetch and carry as we please."  
 He bow'd, then took it on his knees.  
 Some six months after (scene the same)  
 With cap in hand our courtier came  
 To meet King Stephen in his walk,  
 When, as fit prelude to more talk,



The King said, " Courtier, what's o'clock ?"

The courtier, in his true blue frock,

Making a most obsequious slide,

Produc'd his watch with humble pride,

And, in a soft and silken tone,

Cried, " Sire, 'tis half an hour past one."

" Past one ! odds body," said the King,

" Look at the sun, 'tis no such thing,

" He is not near his noon-tide height,

" Beshrew me, 'tis not much past eight."

" My Liege," reply'd the dainty creature,

" I rest upon my regulator ;

This best of watches, best of things,

Giv'n by the very best of Kings,

Is ever present to my view ;

The sun may err—*It* must be true.

O ne'er shall my disloyal eyes

Trust yon vague time-piece of the skies ;

That sun—I thank him for his light,

It shews me this more splendid sight,

This pledge of your refulgent favour.

But let not the vain thing endeavour

To shine the ruler of my time ;

No, gracious Sire, both eve and prime

Your gift shall regulate my motions,

My meals, secretions, nay devotions.

And may you, Sire ! (which Heaven forefend)

With one dread frown my being end,

If e'er my faith so far should falter,

As dare the watch you set, to alter!

Which, like its donor, day and night

Still tick-tacks obstinately right;

Whose every wheel disdains to run,

Directed by yon factious fun;

And goes, my Sovereign, I assure ye,

As well *de facto*, as *de jure*."

King Stephen smil'd, and gracious cried,

"Troth, thou hast taken the right side;

The fun's a whig<sup>x</sup>—as I'm a finner,

'Tis time to dress and go to dinner."

T H E E N D.

+ "If the King saith at Noon-day it is Night, you  
are to behold the Moon & the Star." Persian Proverb.  
Reed's Sketch. IX. 167, 8.